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From the Director: Sir John Borcham, K.C.B.

Our Ref: A22/26

2 February 1981



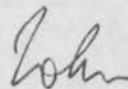
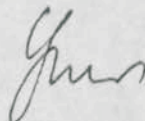
SIR DEREK RAYNER'S REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICES

1. The Lord President has written today to Ministers in charge of departments with statistical services inviting them to provide information about implementing the recommendations in Sir Derek Rayner's Report to the Prime Minister on his Review of the Government Statistical Services. The Lord President's aim is to publish the Report and a statement containing Ministers' decisions on its recommendations (including all the recommendations in the individual departmental reports) before Easter. The Lord President has asked the Minister of State (CSD) to act on his behalf and asked me to assist Mr Hayhoe and departments as necessary. In practice this means that I will have to produce a draft of the statement, drawing on information provided by departments, soon after 6 March.
2. Because of the very tight time table I have made a start by writing directly to heads of statistics divisions in departments asking for their help in putting in hand the work needed to provide me with material for the statement. Copies of my letter and its annex are enclosed for you and your Principal Establishment Officer. The annex is a schedule setting out my proposals for action needed to implement Sir Derek Rayner's Report, the first part of which contains recommendations of common interest to departments.
3. There are 5 recommendations (nos. 7, 8, 21, 25 and the 2nd part of 15) which affect the general running of departments and I would like to draw your attention to them. The full texts are attached. I should be grateful if you would let me know if you feel that there would be any difficulties in accepting these recommendations.
4. The second part of Sir Derek Rayner's Report includes a brief summary of the individual departmental reports. The Lord President's letter to Ministers and my more detailed letter to Directors of Statistics set a very tight timetable for resolving outstanding points in each department's individual action

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document and ask for summarised action documents to be produced in a uniform format suitable for publication. This timetable is necessary if the Report and the Government's statement are to be published before Easter. Please let me know if there is any way I can help to resolve difficulties and speed things up. My people will of course be in touch with Directors of Statistics on a day-to-day basis.

5. I am copying this letter to those on the attached list.



JOHN BOREHAM

ENCS

Extracts from "Review of Government Statistical Services"

Recommendation 7

Departmental rules should require all divisions to consult the senior statistician before proposals with a statistical implication are put to Ministers, so that data costs can be properly brought out.

Recommendation 8

When reviewing statistical work (see recommendations 10 and 22) generalised arguments for preserving the status quo need to be challenged. Particular attention needs to be paid to all information collected or costs incurred primarily to meet demands outside central government. There will be exceptions (for example due to confidentiality of data sources), but in general there is no more reason for Government to act as universal provider in the statistical field than in any other.

Recommendation 15

✓The CSO should monitor the availability of registers for improving sampling and should stimulate development of techniques for more efficient estimation of grossed-up values and samples that avoid concentration on individual small firms period after period. ✓ Ministers should consider on their merits proposals to amend administrative systems to improve their usefulness for sampling and for statistics generally, bearing in mind any savings in form-filling as well as possible administrative costs.

Recommendation 21

The review has shown that generalists, working constructively and openly alongside the professionals, can inform themselves without getting blinded by science. The reports have demonstrated convincingly the benefits to be gained from this. Those responsible for managing the Department's resources of money and manpower under the Minister should know about the work that is being done in the statistical branches; they should exercise fully their responsibility to ask probing questions about this work on behalf of the Minister.

Recommendation 25

The likely reduction in the Statistician Group is 8% and in the Social Survey Officer Group 40% - though the former may increase as departments work out their plans. I am concerned that this reduction should be worked through effectively and so as to preserve the best in the statistical services. For the purpose of implementing this report there should be a presumption for the centrally managed Statistician Group that the Head of the Government Statistical Service may look with confidence to individual Departments to release statisticians for service elsewhere. If, having taken into account local staffing issues, the Head of the Government Statistical Service makes such a request to the Permanent Secretary concerned I hope that he will receive ready cooperation.

COPY LIST FOR SIR JOHN BOREHAM'S LETTER OF 2 FEBRUARY TO SIR BRIAN CUBBON:

Sir Wilfrid Bourne
Sir Peter Preston
Sir Douglas Wass
Sir Lawrence Airey
Sir Douglas Lovelock
Sir Peter Carey
Sir Kenneth Clucas
Sir Frank Cooper
Sir Kenneth Barnes
Sir Brian Hayes
Sir John Garlick
Sir Peter Baldwin
Sir William Fraser
T P Hughes
Sir Kenneth Stowe
Sir Patrick Nairne
Sir Donald Maitland
Sir James Hamilton
J S Cassels
J H Locke
E A Johnston
Sir Derek Rayner
Sir Ian Bancroft
Sir Robert Armstrong
PS/The Lord President
PS/Mr Hayhoe
R H Wilson



Govt. Mail

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The Rt Hon Lord Soames CH PC GGCMG GCVO CBE
Lord President of the Council
Civil Service Department
Whitehall
London SW1

✓ M.A.

25 March 1981

Dear Christopher,

REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICES *with data
if required*

In your letter to Willie Whitelaw dated 2 February, you showed me in the annex as being the Minister responsible for pursuing Recommendation (6) in Sir Derek Rayner's report on the Government statistical services, viz that computing at OPCS should be included in the Scrutiny programme.

This has been under discussion at official level. The proposal first arose out of a recommendation in the initial Rayner study of OPCS that there should be a service-wide study of computer installations dealing with statistical work. The idea was to make comparisons between the practices in different computer installations, so it would not make much sense to hold a scrutiny of OPCS computing in isolation. However, Sir Derek Rayner's recommendations (4), (5) and (6) all relate to statistical computing and I understand that Sir John Boreham is considering how to follow them up as a package. This would, as I understand it, include OPCS computing in the Scrutiny Programme alongside other departments. On this basis I agree that computing should be OPCS's contribution to the Scrutiny Programme.

*Your ever
Patrice*

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